



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ARTISTIC WALL PAPER.

WALL PAPER, the manufacture of which dates back two centuries, has, in quite recent times, within the restrictions to which the material and its application are subject, rapidly risen in the artistic scale, whilst the variety of patterns turned out has also steadily multiplied. This very variety is apt to prove embarrassing to private buyers, whose perplexity is further increased by having to take into account the modifying effect of border or frieze, the size and character of the rooms to be papered, the amount of light available, and the general tone of the woodwork and furnishings. Some apartments will allow of rendering the hangings more prominent than others in which they answer their purpose in serving as quiet, unobtrusive backgrounds. Pre-



DESIGNED BY J. A. HEWITT FOR "DECORATION."

vailing fashions, too, must be allowed their influence. Wall hangings are apt to respond in patterns to each accepted transition in figured dress goods and even carpets. As to designs, boldness in departing from stereotyped styles, as the term is generally understood, is the best way for designers to obtain artistic effects. With all the varieties of patterns issued we have not yet enough. There is a too prevailing formalism, the heritage of the past, which needs to be broken up. What is mainly needed is that colors should be nicely applied with a soft, pleasing, general tone, a requirement which does not exclude the employment of rich, mellow tones, and even of

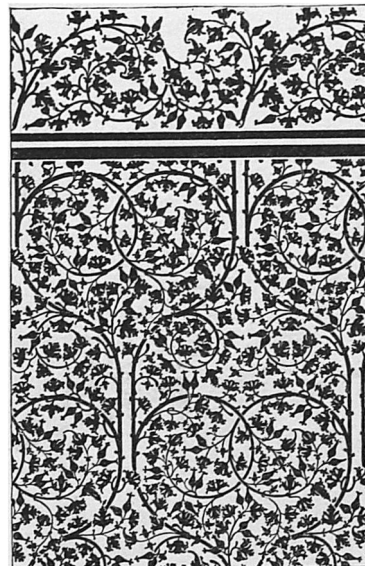
brilliant hues duly subordinated. Architects themselves, with the view of better setting off fine architectural details of apartments, incline to the adoption of light neutral tints, but manufacturers and dealers producing and handling wall paper of the richest patterns are apt to complain that this tendency is carried too far, as, for instance, in the all-abounding diaper treatment, where the pattern merely repeats the ground in a darker or in a complementary color. At all events, no commendation can be extended to weak, expressionless patterns. The so-called estheticisms of art under cover of which decayed leaves and all

artistically and with reposeful effect a number of clear toned colors, than a few simple light hues, as a mellow of the reverse color on a ground of almost invisible green, and decidedly more beauty in good contrasting effects than in bringing together analogous colors. There is, to be sure, good reason for the avoidance of strict pictorial representation of natural objects, nor would such treatment, in many cases, be artistically safe. Thus a rose presenting the colors of red, yellow, and a spot of white in a hanging, will, as one retreats from it, lose its distinctness and present an offensive color effect. There are flowers which allow of a true representation of their hues, but great caution is necessary in their selection. In an admirable wall decoration intended for halls, a slender but richly leaved plant rises to the left of the paneled space, appears to have sprinkled its buds in irregular fashion over the remaining ground. Conventionalized treatment of natural objects are much more artistic when applied to wall decoration than an exact imitation. It is to be regretted that in works on decoration, which include the subject of mural adornment, the writers are usually too obtuse and obscure to be understood by the general public, being disposed to lay down dictums which limit unreasonably the scope of art in this line, or, at all events, do not cover the whole field. Design in this suggestive age is not to be arbitrarily restrained. So long as wall paper patterns present pleasing combinations of color, in forms suitable to the material, they are within the domain of legitimate art. The judicious application of these to apartments is quite another thing. The large offices of insurance, banking, and other corporations will allow of florid hangings quite unsuitable for the walls of private residences.

Wall paper dealers constantly complain of being harassed by the ignorance of the public; still there is no such thing as absolutism in taste, and if people will have natural objects represented in full relief with delicate shading, let them have it. There is an infinitude of tastes and fancies to be consulted by the dealer. There is even what may be called a sectional diversity of tastes as to wall paper hangings in this country. In the east light tints prevail, in the west and south the more brilliant colors, the south inclining to red and yellow, with the forceful contrast of black. An order from Indianapolis could readily be distinguished as far as the pattern is concerned, from one coming from Boston. The highest taste asserts itself in large cities, the demand being for soft and simple designs in few colors.

Wall hangings, to adopt a Chaucerian expression, should be "righte pleyasnte," or of a cheery aspect. Owing to ill-selected colors or the tones employed, thousands of halls of pretentious mansions are quite repelling by their gloomy tone. Now, whilst the hangings of an apartment may improve on leisurely survey, and under the influence of surroundings, those of the hall which is no place to linger in, and seen only cursorily, are apt to convey on the instant a lasting impression to the visitor. It is an accepted rule, not always followed, that these hangings should be darker than those of the parlors opening on the hall.

The contrast in this respect may be made the greater if the hall has abundant light. Elaborate patterns are, by no means, called for. Geometric

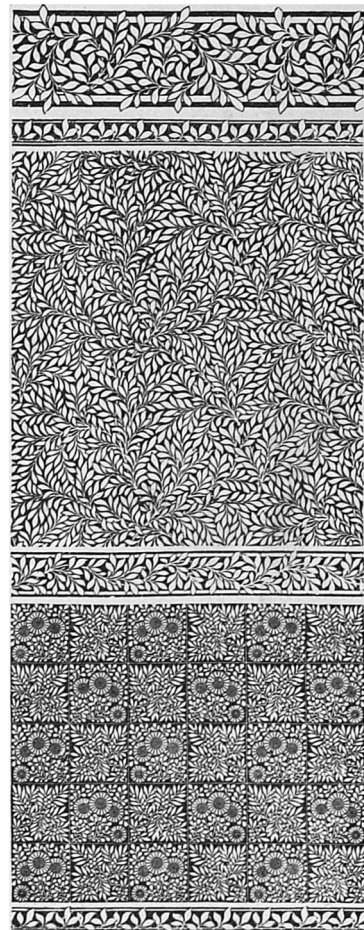


DESIGNED BY J. O. HARRIS FOR "DECORATION."

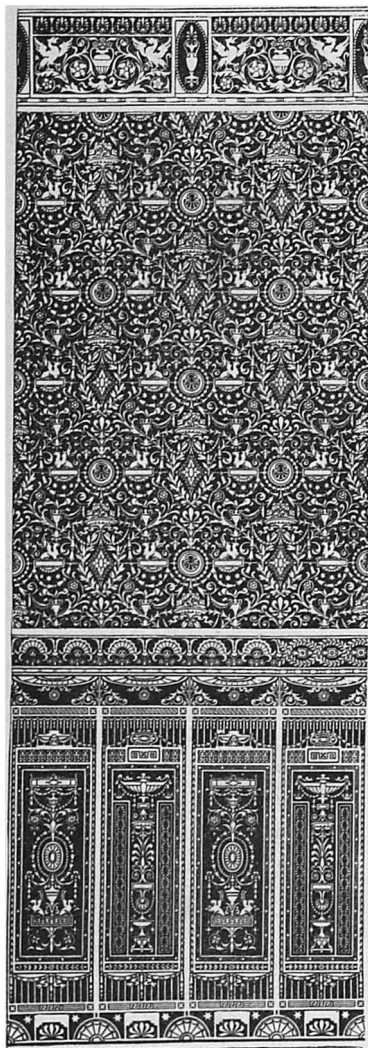
and particularly tile forms, which would be out of place in a parlor, dining or drawing-room, suit well the essentially structural representations of tapestry work now rendered on paper with their rich and subdued hues, the tableaux representing classic, sentimental, and historical scenes, are well adapted to hall and stairway mural decorations.

The parlor puts in a first claim for brightness and cheerfulness in wall hangings. These must be such as will not detract from oil paintings and pictures. Light, subdued colors in clear tones—positive colors, if introduced, being used very sparingly—should characterize the pattern. An all-over design is preferable to any pattern of the bouquet sort, with its wearisome repetitions and unfailing regularity. The general tone of the paper should be to some extent determined by hues of woodwork of doors and window frames, furniture, and carpets. The hangings should not conform to but contrast with the latter. Detached figures of the bouquet order, with their wearisome continuity, are always ungainly, an ungainliness increased by picture frames unequally dividing them on either side. Where parlors combine a medley of colors, confusing in their juxtaposition, and where the result is an excessive or somewhat gaudy brightness, a quiet hanging suitable for a room artistically furnished with reference to hues, might offer a strong unpleasant contrast; the pattern must somewhat fall in hue. Light patterns are generally the best. These must have no structural forms or defined trellises and lines. Such dominant colors in the design, or constituting the ground as light violet, light chrome green, olive shaded, light blueish green, grayish olive, or cerulean blue, are in keeping and are least likely to impair the attractiveness of the suspended picture frames.

The pattern for a dining-room should, without the slightest approach to heaviness and dullness, so far conform to other surroundings as to be suggestive of substantial comfort. The moderate use of positive colors in broken form, with complementaries in rich warm tones, are well adapted to dining-room hangings. Bold and elegant decoration is in order, rich tones contrasted sparingly with lighter enrichments so well illustrated in the artistic treatment of stained glass, and in all rooms where light is not plenty use bright colors.



EXAMPLE FROM WM. MORRIS.



ONE OF WM. WOOLAMS & CO.'S PAPERS.

but unrecognizable flowers, and weakly symbolized types of natural objects are sought to be justified, is practically of little account as applied to wall paper. There is much more merit in combining



PAPER FROM JEFFREYS & CO.